



# College Planning

## Saving For College: Seven Super Budget Tips

(NAPSA)—Learning how to create a budget—and stick to it—is vital to proper money management. Techniques will differ. Some people like to jot income and expenses down on paper. Others keep a sophisticated budget spreadsheet, while others prefer using a free, online budget planner that does most of the work for them.

Experts acknowledge there isn't a single "right way" to budget your money. What does matter is to pick a method that makes sense to you and that you will stick with.

### Budget Tips

Designing and sticking to a budget can help you pay down debts and save for the future. "If you are ready to make earning your degree a top priority, of course paying for it is going to be a concern," said Dr. Mary Hawkins, president of Bellevue University. "By freeing up funds through debt reduction or reallocating from areas where you may be overspending, you can begin saving for your education." Hawkins' budget-planning tips include:

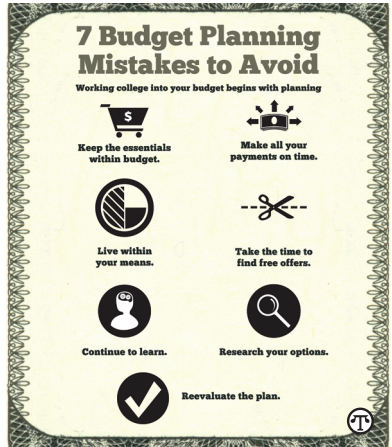
**1. Keep the essentials within budget.** Food, gas and toiletries are necessities, so it is easy to pick up everything you need without thinking about the total. Even with these items, you need to stick to the budget you have planned. If you are finding this difficult, carry the amount in cash so you cannot overspend on your debit or credit card.

**2. Make all your payments on time.** Skipping payments results in late fees, which will only push you deeper and deeper into a financial hole.

**3. Live within your means.** This sounds simple, but many people do not realize how much they are spending until they write it down or type it out.

As painful as it may be, if you find you are spending more every month or paycheck than you are bringing in, you will need to make some changes. This may mean finding an additional source of income or reducing spending in some areas.

**4. Find free offers.** There are a wealth of websites and blogs out there devoted to listing free offers



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—these range from samples to full-size products.

**5. Continue to learn.** Financial sites such as bankrate.com provide advice on the issues you face as you plan and live by your budget. Education-specific sites like makeithappennow.org provide more advice on paying for your degree.

**6. Research your options.** Many schools have thousands of scholarship dollars that go unused because students don't take the time to apply. Also check with your employer. A growing number of employers are offering education benefits.

**7. Evaluate the plan.** Unexpected and periodic expenses (like holidays or car taxes) are inevitable. With each paycheck, reevaluate the plan to see if it is still the best route or if adjustments need to be made. Be sure to do this before the money is in the bank, as it is tempting to spend irresponsibly if the plan is not established.

Every person must follow his or her own path to education. Perhaps you will save for a long time and complete your degree all at once, or maybe you will pay for one class at a time as your savings accumulate.

Regardless of how you get there or what budget-planning method you use, planning and diligence can keep you on the right path.

Learn more at [www.makeithappennow.org](http://www.makeithappennow.org).